

## **GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY FOR NRCS FIELD OFFICES**

A cultural resource (CR) survey must take place before an undertaking associated with a NRCS practice or project can begin. An undertaking is defined as a potentially CR disturbing event.

Field office personnel who have reached the proper “ASK” level may conduct surface reconnaissance for cultural resources. ASK (ability, skill & knowledge) levels are awarded to personnel who have successfully completed the CR training course. NRCS personnel must attain ASK level 3 before they can conduct CR surveys independently.

Because survey techniques are limited to visual inspection, there must be a reasonable amount of surface visibility present. Ground (soil) surface visibility should be 70% or better in order to conduct these surveys.

### **SURVEY TECHNIQUES**

1. Establish the entire area to be effected by the planned undertaking activity. Areas including steep slopes of 15% or greater, tidal areas, and permanent standing water (including hydric soil areas) may be omitted from the survey, unless known cultural resources are present. Always be aware of the possibility of wet area sites such as mill houses and boat landings.
2. Walk parallel survey transects (lines) across the applicable areas of the planned undertaking. Survey transects should be no more than 100 ft. apart (30 meters). Give close attention to high probability areas; where high, well drained soils and water sources are present or nearby. Do not hesitate to inspect areas off the survey transect where higher visibility or where subsurface disturbances have already taken place, such as, erosion, past construction, turned up tree root balls, etc.
3. If an artifact(s) is found, give closer inspection to the area around the artifact. If more than two artifacts are found in a ten-foot square area and or soils have good potential to contain archaeological remains, contact CR specialist before proceeding with any activities that may impact the remains.
4. Always call the CR Specialist when a human grave(s) or remains may be impacted or when uncertain about the age of artifacts or features found.
5. Always contact the CR Specialist if cultural remains are located at any time in the Area of Potential Effect of an NRCS assisted practice or project.